



# LABOR MARKET DIMENSIONS

**MARCH, 1991**

**Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development  
Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information  
1100 North Eutaw Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

**William Donald Schaefer, Governor  
J. Randall Evans, Secretary**

## LABOR FORCE DEVELOPMENTS

Seasonal employment growth, although proceeding at a somewhat slower pace, revived Maryland's job market during March, providing a welcome respite from months of rising unemployment. Responding to the expansion in employment opportunities, total unemployment in the state declined by one-half a percentage point to 6.0 percent in March. This decline placed Maryland's rate well below the national estimate which also dropped, albeit minimally, from 7.2 percent to 7.1 percent.

Both the labor force and employment levels, while remaining below pre-recession levels, headed back up in March. Recouping a portion of the losses experienced during the latter part of 1990, the statewide labor force grew by an estimated 21,643 persons during March, rising to 2,512,325. Meanwhile, the number of jobholders grew by slightly more than 32,500—an increase which was both strong enough to absorb the influx of new and re-entrant jobseekers and, at the same time, to reduce the jobless count by an estimated 10,900 persons.

|                            | March<br>1991 | February<br>1991 | March<br>1990 |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Civilian Labor Force       | 2,512,325     | 2,490,682        | 2,535,748     |
| Total Employment           | 2,362,426     | 2,329,883        | 2,442,609     |
| Total Unemployment         | 149,899       | 160,799          | 93,139        |
| Unemployment Rate          | 6.0           | 6.5              | 3.7           |
| National Unemployment Rate | 7.1           | 7.2              | 5.4           |

As has been the pattern for the past several months, labor market changes over the year have shown relatively large declines in both the labor force and employment. Employment declines, however, have outdistanced those in the labor force, causing a significant increase in the level as well as the rate of unemployment. Since last March, nearly 80,200 Marylanders have lost their jobs. While a number of these workers chose to abandon their work search and withdraw from the job market, nearly 56,800 idled workers were added to the unemployment rolls, causing the jobless rate to rise sharply from 3.7 percent in March, 1990 to 6.0 percent in March, 1991. Historically, the current March rate is the highest for the month since March 1983 when a rate of 7.6 percent was reported.

## INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

Activity on Maryland's industrial payrolls during March, for the most part, followed normal seasonal patterns. Job creation, however, was much less than anticipated. During March, industrial payrolls rose by 15,700, falling short of last year's gain by about 9,600 jobs. While growth occurred in both the goods-producing and service-producing sectors, March's strength was drawn primarily from expansion in the service economy. Nearly 85.0 percent of the monthly increase resulted from job creation among service-producers, with overall performance paced primarily by the services and trade industries.

Employment in the services group moved up by 7,600 jobs during March. Health services, one of the industries which has, with but a few exceptions, turned in a positive performance throughout the recession, added another 600 jobs during March. In keeping with current trends, hiring in health care occurred primarily outside the hospital setting. Business services also made a respectable showing, with job gains reported in personnel supply and computer service firms. Other gains within services were largely seasonal, with sizeable contributions resulting from renewed hiring in agricultural services and amusements. In educational services, continuing recall activity at private colleges and universities caused employment to rise.

In the trade sector, job gains of about 3,300 during March were confined solely to the retail component. Performance was mixed in this industry group. Hefty increases were reported in eating and drinking establishments while moderate hiring was noted at hardware stores, auto dealers and apparel stores. These increases, when combined, helped to offset employment declines in general merchandise and food stores.

On the goods-producing side of the economy, a net gain of 2,500 jobs reversed the downward trend which has been curbing employment in this component for the past five months. The cloud which has been looming over the construction industry appeared to be lifting in March, with employment expanding by 4,200 jobs. Despite this gain, employment in construction is nearly 7,000 short of its year ago level. The pick-up occurred primarily among heavy and special trade contractors while conditions in general building remained relatively soft. On the flip side, normal seasonal trends in manufacturing were skewed by a sizeable layoff in instruments and related products which cost in excess of 1,200 jobs in this individual industry line. When combined with layoffs in primary metals, industrial machinery, electronic and transportation equipment, the net result was an overall manufacturing loss of 1,800 jobs in March.

While overall employment in manufacturing dropped, this decline did not impact upon wage and hour statistics. As a matter of fact, weekly wages in manufacturing rose by \$3.20 to \$478.34 in March—an increase which resulted from a \$.05 rise in hourly pay rates combined with a slight lengthening in work schedules from 40.3 hours to 40.4 hours. Changes in durable goods were substantially higher than those in the nondurable component. In durables, a lengthening of 0.3 hour in the average workweek in conjunction with an increase in hourly earnings from \$12.44 to \$12.50, yielded a weekly paycheck of \$525.00 in March. Within durables, shortened workweeks resulted in smaller weekly paychecks in both stone products and primary metals. In nondurables manufacturing, workweeks dropped slightly from 39.1 hours to 39.0 hours, yet weekly paychecks still rose from \$436.75 to \$437.19. The most significant change in nondurables occurred in chemical products where a 2.0 hour reduction in overtime hours lowered paychecks by \$35.95 to \$552.55 in March.

**MARYLAND**  
**NONAGRICULTURAL PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT\* BY INDUSTRY**  
**BY PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT**  
**(IN THOUSANDS)**  
**MARCH 1991**

| Industry                                | March<br>1991  | February<br>1991 | March<br>1990  |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>TOTAL NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT</b> | <b>2,151.5</b> | <b>2,135.8</b>   | <b>2,160.8</b> |
| <b>Goods Producing</b>                  | <b>351.0</b>   | <b>348.5</b>     | <b>367.1</b>   |
| Mining                                  | 2.1            | 2.0              | 2.0            |
| Construction                            | 150.6          | 146.4            | 157.4          |
| Heavy Construction                      | 17.4           | 15.6             | 18.4           |
| Manufacturing                           | 198.3          | 200.1            | 207.7          |
| Durable Goods                           | 102.4          | 104.5            | 111.2          |
| Lumber & Wood Products                  | 3.9            | 3.9              | 4.0            |
| Stone, Clay, & Glass Products           | 8.0            | 8.0              | 8.5            |
| Concrete, Gypsum, Plaster               | 5.0            | 5.0              | 5.3            |
| Other Stone, Clay, & Glass              | 3.0            | 3.0              | 3.2            |
| Primary Metal Industries                | 10.1           | 10.3             | 10.8           |
| Blast Furnaces                          | 8.4            | 8.5              | 9.1            |
| Fabricated Metal Products               | 9.7            | 9.7              | 9.9            |
| Fabricated Structural Metal Products    | 4.0            | 4.0              | 4.2            |
| Other Fabricated Metal Products         | 4.6            | 4.6              | 4.6            |
| Industrial Machinery                    | 15.8           | 16.0             | 17.1           |
| Refrigeration & Service Mach.           | 2.2            | 2.2              | 2.4            |
| Other Industrial Machinery & Equipment  | 9.4            | 9.5              | 10.0           |
| Electronic Equipment                    | 14.6           | 14.8             | 16.7           |
| Communications Equipment                | 4.2            | 4.3              | 4.5            |
| Electronic Component                    | 3.7            | 3.7              | 4.5            |
| Other Electronic Equipment              | 6.7            | 6.8              | 7.7            |
| Transportation Equipment                | 12.5           | 12.8             | 14.3           |
| Motor Vehicles                          | 5.2            | 5.2              | 5.7            |
| Other Transportation                    | 2.7            | 3.0              | 3.4            |
| Instruments & Related                   | 22.3           | 23.5             | 24.3           |
| Miscellaneous Manufacturing             | 2.6            | 2.7              | 2.7            |
| Nondurable Goods                        | 95.9           | 95.6             | 96.5           |
| Food & Kindred Products                 | 24.7           | 24.5             | 24.0           |
| Meat Products                           | 6.1            | 6.0              | 5.6            |
| Beverages                               | 4.2            | 4.1              | 4.2            |
| Other Food & Kindred                    | 9.8            | 9.7              | 9.8            |
| Textile Mill, Apparel                   | 9.9            | 9.8              | 10.2           |
| Paper & Allied Products                 | 9.6            | 9.5              | 9.4            |
| Printing & Publishing                   | 27.9           | 28.0             | 28.8           |
| Chemicals and Allied Products           | 13.7           | 13.6             | 13.7           |
| Rubber & Miscellaneous                  | 8.1            | 8.2              | 8.3            |
| Other Nondurable Goods                  | 2.0            | 2.0              | 2.1            |

| Industry                            | March<br>1991  | February<br>1991 | March<br>1990  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Service Producing</b>            | <b>1,800.5</b> | <b>1,787.3</b>   | <b>1,793.7</b> |
| Transportation & Public Utilities   | 101.8          | 100.6            | 100.6          |
| Transportation                      | 57.2           | 56.3             | 56.3           |
| Railroad Transportation             | 4.4            | 4.4              | 4.7            |
| Trucking & Warehousing              | 29.5           | 28.9             | 28.5           |
| Communications & Utilities          | 44.6           | 44.3             | 44.3           |
| Communications                      | 28.2           | 28.0             | 28.2           |
| Electric, Gas, Sanitary             | 16.4           | 16.3             | 16.1           |
| Trade                               | 517.0          | 513.7            | 522.1          |
| Wholesale Trade                     | 108.3          | 108.3            | 109.2          |
| Retail Trade                        | 408.7          | 405.4            | 412.9          |
| Building Materials, Garden Supplies | 17.0           | 16.5             | 17.1           |
| General Merchandise                 | 42.8           | 43.4             | 43.9           |
| Food Stores                         | 65.7           | 66.0             | 65.1           |
| Eating & Drinking Places            | 128.9          | 125.5            | 129.7          |
| Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate   | 130.9          | 131.2            | 131.1          |
| Finance                             | 57.6           | 58.0             | 58.8           |
| Depository Institutions             | 42.1           | 42.4             | 43.0           |
| Commercial Banks                    | 27.1           | 27.3             | 27.8           |
| Insurance                           | 39.1           | 39.2             | 38.2           |
| Insurance Carriers                  | 26.1           | 26.2             | 25.2           |
| Real Estate                         | 34.2           | 34.0             | 34.1           |
| Services                            | 623.8          | 616.2            | 616.5          |
| Business Services                   | 133.5          | 132.7            | 134.5          |
| Health Services                     | 162.0          | 161.4            | 156.0          |
| Hospitals                           | 80.0           | 79.8             | 76.3           |
| Legal Services                      | 16.0           | 15.9             | 15.8           |
| Educational Services                | 37.5           | 36.6             | 37.3           |
| Private Colleges, Universities      | 19.8           | 19.0             | 19.5           |
| Total Government                    | 427.0          | 425.6            | 423.4          |
| Total Federal Government            | 132.6          | 132.6            | 133.2          |
| Department of Defense               | 47.3           | 47.4             | 47.3           |
| Other Federal Government            | 85.3           | 85.2             | 85.9           |
| Total State & Local Government      | 294.4          | 293.0            | 290.2          |
| Total State Government              | 101.0          | 100.3            | 99.4           |
| State Education                     | 34.5           | 33.8             | 33.0           |
| Other State Government              | 66.5           | 66.5             | 66.4           |
| Total Local Government              | 193.4          | 192.7            | 190.8          |
| Local Education                     | 118.0          | 116.3            | 117.0          |
| Other Local Government              | 75.4           | 76.4             | 73.8           |

\*The count is of jobs, not workers. It includes full and part-time wage earners employed during pay period including the 12th of the month.

NOTE: Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.

Current data preliminary; previous month revised.

Prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# HOURS AND EARNINGS OF PRODUCTION WORKERS IN SELECTED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES MARCH 1991

| Industry                               | AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS |               | AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS |               | AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS |               |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
|                                        | March 1991           | February 1991 | March 1991              | February 1991 | March 1991              | February 1991 |
| <b>MARYLAND</b>                        |                      |               |                         |               |                         |               |
| Manufacturing                          |                      |               |                         |               | \$11.84                 | \$11.79       |
| Durable Goods                          | 40.4                 | 40.3          | \$478.34                | \$475.14      | 12.50                   | 12.44         |
| Lumber and Wood Products               | 42.0                 | 41.7          | 525.00                  | 518.75        | 8.85                    | 8.85          |
| Stone, Clay, and Glass Products        | 38.7                 | 38.5          | 342.50                  | 340.73        | 11.46                   | 11.60         |
| Primary Metal Industries               | 43.0                 | 43.5          | 492.78                  | 504.60        | 16.22                   | 16.28         |
| Blast Furnaces                         | 41.7                 | 42.4          | 676.37                  | 690.27        | 16.50                   | 16.61         |
| Fabricated Metals                      | 42.0                 | 42.7          | 693.00                  | 709.25        | 10.59                   | 10.48         |
| Industrial Machinery                   | 41.2                 | 41.2          | 436.31                  | 431.78        | 13.00                   | 12.83         |
| Electronic Equipment                   | 42.4                 | 41.7          | 551.20                  | 535.01        | 9.55                    | 9.52          |
| Transportation Equipment               | 47.0                 | 47.1          | 448.85                  | 448.39        | 15.84                   | 15.84         |
| Instruments and Related Products       | 39.8                 | 38.4          | 630.43                  | 608.26        | 13.70                   | 13.35         |
| Miscellaneous Manufacturing Industries | 42.8                 | 40.8          | 586.36                  | 544.68        | 9.55                    | 9.35          |
|                                        | 39.2                 | 39.0          | 374.36                  | 364.65        |                         |               |
| Nondurable Goods                       | 39.0                 | 39.1          | 437.19                  | 436.75        | 11.21                   | 11.17         |
| Food and Kindred Products              | 39.4                 | 39.1          | 410.55                  | 403.51        | 10.42                   | 10.32         |
| Textile Mill, Apparel                  | 34.8                 | 35.0          | 267.96                  | 266.00        | 7.70                    | 7.60          |
| Paper and Allied Products              | 41.8                 | 41.6          | 495.33                  | 487.14        | 11.85                   | 11.71         |
| Printing and Publishing                | 37.3                 | 36.4          | 501.69                  | 483.03        | 13.45                   | 13.27         |
| Chemicals and Allied Products          | 41.0                 | 43.0          | 516.60                  | 552.55        | 12.60                   | 12.85         |
| Rubber and Plastic Products            | 42.5                 | 43.2          | 418.63                  | 434.16        | 9.85                    | 10.05         |
| <b>BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA</b>     |                      |               |                         |               |                         |               |
| Manufacturing                          | 40.9                 | 40.7          | \$502.66                | \$501.42      | \$12.29                 | \$12.32       |
| Durable Goods                          | 41.8                 | 41.3          | 550.09                  | 543.51        | 13.16                   | 13.16         |
| Nondurable Goods                       | 39.9                 | 40.1          | 453.66                  | 457.54        | 11.37                   | 11.41         |

## **REGIONAL ECONOMICS**

### **BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA**

Seasonal expansion also helped to alleviate unemployment in the Baltimore Metro Area where a decline of slightly more than 1,800 persons on the region's jobless rolls eased the area's unemployment rate down from 7.0 percent in February to 6.8 percent in March. All of the region's jurisdictions, with the exception of Baltimore County where unemployment held steady at 6.0 percent, reported lower jobless rates during March. In the central locales, specifically Anne Arundel and Baltimore City, unemployment declines were moderated by layoffs in the manufacturing industry. In both Carroll and Harford counties, declines of almost a full percentage point lowered unemployment rates to 6.6 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively. Even with these declines, unemployment rates in these two counties were more than double those reported last year at this time. On a regional basis, hiring activity was strongest in eating and drinking places, business services, special trade contractors, and state education. Job declines, on the other hand, were reported in a number of industries, with losses in instruments manufacturing accounting for slightly more than 80.0 percent of the Metro Area's manufacturing decline.

### **MARYLAND'S D.C. SUBURBS**

In Maryland's D.C. Suburbs, unemployment also subsided from 4.5 percent in February to 4.1 percent in March. Employment in the region rose by more than 12,000, an increase which helped to lower the unemployment count by 3,264 to 40,828 in March. All of the suburban counties contributed to this decline, with the largest change occurring in Frederick County. In Frederick, the stability of the labor force helped to maximize the increase in employment and to reduce joblessness by more than a full percentage point to 6.9 percent in March. Montgomery, with an unemployment rate of 3.1 percent, held its position at the low end of the jobless spectrum for the fifth consecutive month. As was true statewide, industrial payrolls, while moving ahead in March, expanded much more slowly than anticipated. The overall gain was paced primarily by gains in the services industry, with hiring activity noted in engineering and business services, amusements and membership organizations.

### **WESTERN MARYLAND**

After two months of double-digit unemployment, Western Maryland's jobless rate dropped to 9.8 percent in March. Even so, Western Maryland had the highest unemployment of the state's four regions. Employment gains during March led to a drop of more than 1,500 on the regional unemployment rolls. Jobless rates dropped back by more than a full percentage point in each of the western region's member counties. In both Allegany and Garrett counties, employment gains, coupled with declines in the labor force, resulted in unemployment reductions. Western Maryland's industry payrolls moved up by 900 jobs during March, with hiring reported in all industry lines with the exception of manufacturing. Hiring activity was strongest in construction while, in government, payrolls rose in response to continuing recall activity.

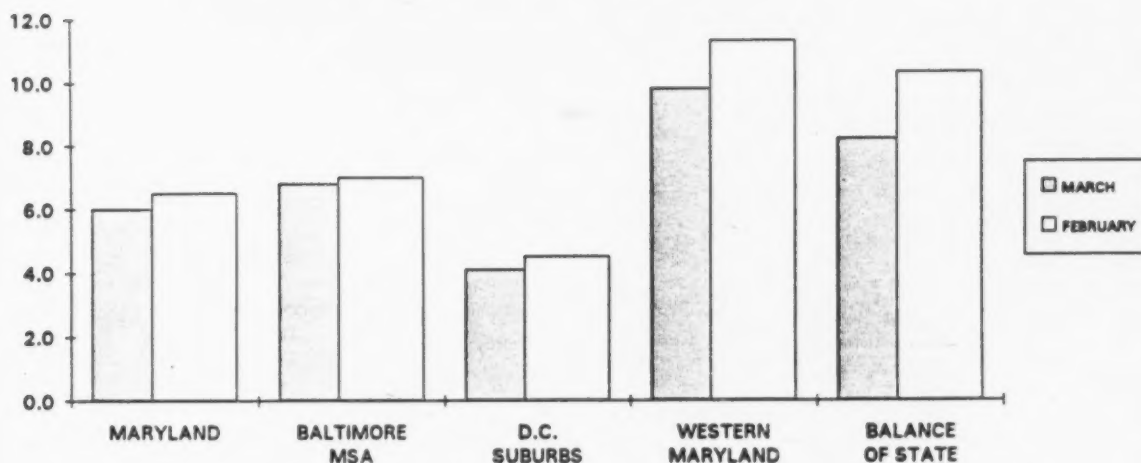
## BALANCE OF STATE

Labor market conditions improved considerably on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland. With an increase of slightly more than 4,800 in the number of jobholders, unemployment volume dropped back by 4,267 and the unemployment rate declined from 10.3 percent to 8.2 percent. All jurisdictions reported declining joblessness, with local unemployment rates ranging from 5.3 percent in Talbot to 13.4 percent in Somerset. Double-digit jobless rates continued to plague Dorchester and Worcester counties. In Cecil, while layoffs in Delaware's auto industry continued to affect local residents, unemployment declined nonetheless from 13.7 percent to 8.8 percent. A large portion of Cecil's jobless decline, however, was attributable to a reduction in the local labor force. Activity on the region's industrial payrolls reflected the seasonality of the shore's economy, with gains in eating and drinking places and hotels signaling a gradual pick-up in tourism-related businesses.

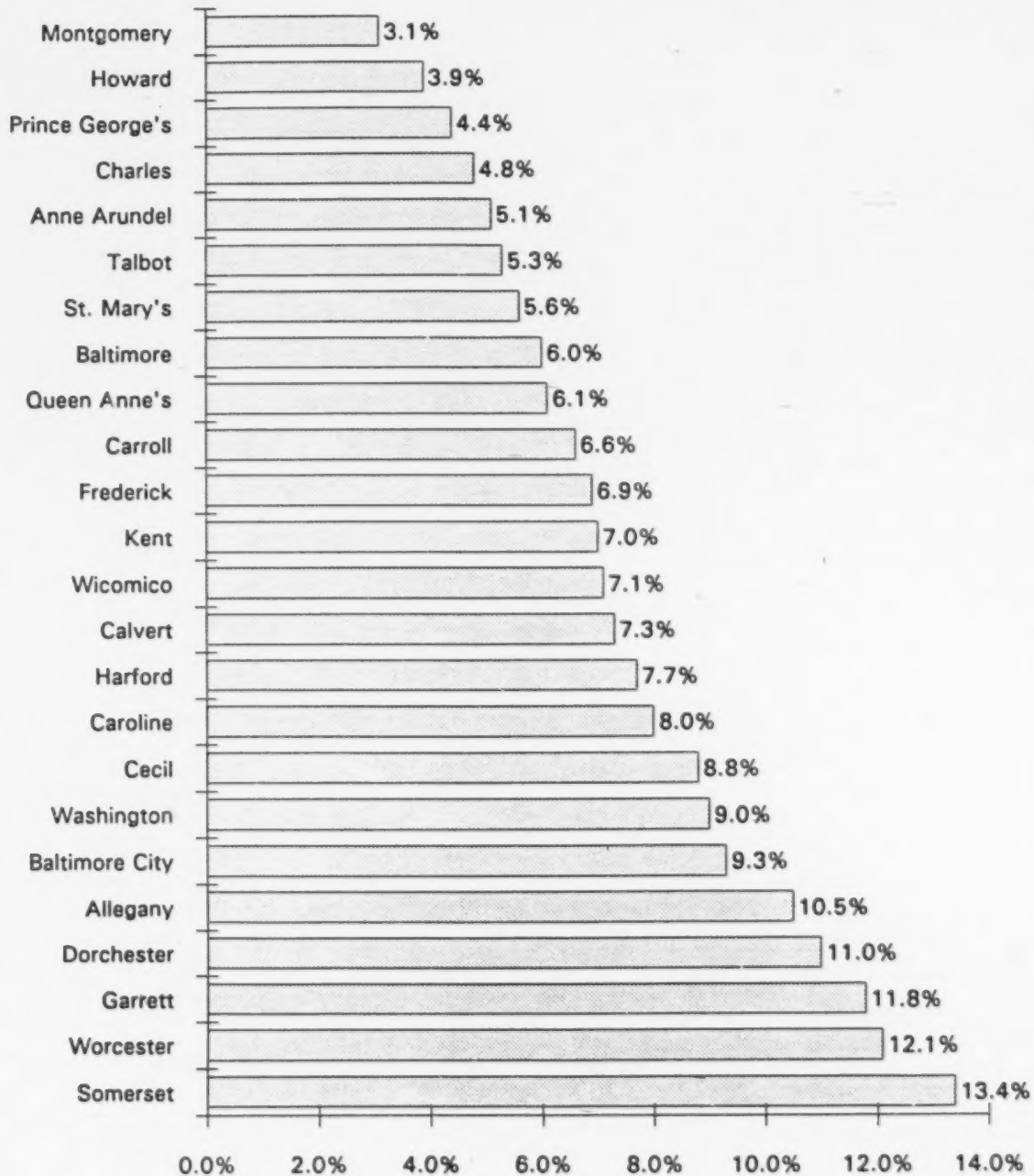
### TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT - MARYLAND AND REGIONS

|                             | MARCH 1991 |      | FEBRUARY 1991 |      |
|-----------------------------|------------|------|---------------|------|
|                             | NUMBER     | RATE | NUMBER        | RATE |
| MARYLAND                    | 149,899    | 6.0  | 160,799       | 6.5  |
| BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA | 81,434     | 6.8  | 83,263        | 7.0  |
| MARYLAND'S D.C. SUBURBS     | 40,828     | 4.1  | 44,092        | 4.5  |
| WESTERN MARYLAND            | 10,576     | 9.8  | 12,114        | 11.3 |
| BALANCE OF STATE            | 17,062     | 8.2  | 21,329        | 10.3 |

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATES - MARCH 1991



## LOCAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES-MARCH 1991





# **NONAGRICULTURAL PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT\* BY INDUSTRY--BY PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT** **(IN THOUSANDS)**

**BY REGION--MARCH 1991**

| Industry                          | BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA |               | MARYLAND PORTION D.C. SUBURBS |               | WESTERN MARYLAND |               | BALANCE OF STATE |               |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
|                                   | March 1991                  | February 1991 | March 1991                    | February 1991 | March 1991       | February 1991 | March 1991       | February 1991 |
| Total Nonagricultural Employment  | 1,142.1                     | 1,134.3       | 776.0                         | 770.8         | 92.5             | 91.6          | 138.3            | 136.2         |
| Goods Producing                   | 194.4                       | 194.4         | 99.4                          | 98.8          | 21.7             | 21.5          | 32.3             | 31.9          |
| Mining                            | 0.5                         | 0.5           | 0.5                           | 0.5           | 0.7              | 0.7           | 0.2              | 0.2           |
| Construction                      | 69.1                        | 67.5          | 63.4                          | 62.3          | 5.5              | 5.2           | 9.5              | 9.0           |
| Manufacturing                     | 124.8                       | 126.4         | 35.5                          | 36.0          | 15.5             | 15.6          | 22.6             | 22.7          |
| Durable Goods                     | 68.7                        | 70.3          | 17.7                          | 18.2          | 7.0              | 7.1           | 8.7              | 8.8           |
| Nondurable Goods                  | 56.1                        | 56.1          | 17.8                          | 17.8          | 8.5              | 8.5           | 13.9             | 13.9          |
| Service Producing                 | 947.7                       | 939.9         | 676.6                         | 672.0         | 70.8             | 70.1          | 106.0            | 104.3         |
| Transportation & Public Utilities | 55.7                        | 54.9          | 33.7                          | 33.4          | 3.1              | 5.0           | 7.2              | 7.3           |
| Trade                             | 263.5                       | 260.9         | 196.0                         | 195.3         | 26.0             | 25.9          | 33.9             | 33.0          |
| Wholesale Trade                   | 62.9                        | 62.5          | 35.5                          | 35.5          | 5.0              | 5.0           | 5.1              | 5.0           |
| Retail Trade                      | 200.6                       | 198.4         | 160.5                         | 159.8         | 21.0             | 20.9          | 28.8             | 28.0          |
| Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate | 75.7                        | 75.6          | 45.9                          | 46.1          | 3.2              | 3.1           | 5.0              | 4.9           |
| Services                          | 333.8                       | 330.0         | 235.7                         | 232.7         | 21.4             | 21.3          | 33.1             | 32.5          |
| Total Government                  | 219.0                       | 218.5         | 165.3                         | 164.5         | 15.1             | 14.8          | 26.8             | 26.6          |
| Federal                           | 50.7                        | 50.6          | 72.7                          | 72.8          | 1.8              | 1.8           | 6.8              | 6.8           |
| State                             | 73.6                        | 72.7          | 18.0                          | 17.8          | 4.9              | 4.7           | 5.8              | 5.8           |
| Local                             | 94.7                        | 95.2          | 74.6                          | 73.9          | 8.4              | 8.3           | 14.2             | 14.0          |

\*The count is of jobs, not workers. It includes full and part-time wage earners employed during pay period including the 12th of the month.

NOTE: Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.

Additional industry detail available upon request. Current data preliminary; previous month revised.

Prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

|                      | March<br>1991 | February<br>1991 | March<br>1990 |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Initial Claims       | 26,579        | 30,622           | 15,610        |
| Weeks Claimed        | 346,326       | 334,233          | 167,018       |
| First Payments       | 14,309        | 22,874           | 7,598         |
| Final Payments       | 2,977         | 3,084            | 1,645         |
| Weeks Paid           | 273,466       | 281,939          | 152,449       |
| Net Benefit Amount   | \$48,929,866  | \$50,486,685     | \$20,824,270  |
| Average Check Amount | \$178.92      | \$179.07         | \$136.60      |

After peaking at about 52,000 in January, the number of initial claims processed at local unemployment offices fell for the second consecutive month, dropping by 13.2 percent to 26,579 in March. Even with this decline, initial claims reports are considerably higher than last year's count of 15,610. At the same time, the movement in weeks claimed broke away from normal seasonal patterns by rising during March. An over the month increase of 12,093 raised March's weeks claimed count to 346,326. About 79.0 percent, or 273,466, of all weekly claims for compensation resulted in payments, down from 84.4 percent in February and substantially below last March's payment ratio of 91.3 percent. Regionally, weekly payments subsided in each of Maryland's four areas, with the largest decline, of about 13.8 percent or 3,815, occurring in the tri-county Western Region.

Just over 5.0 percent of all claims paid during March represented first payments while 1.1 percent of all weeks compensated were received by claimants exhausting their benefits. In all, about 2,977 final benefit checks were issued during March, more than 50.0 percent of which were distributed to filers in the Baltimore Metro Area. Within the BMA, Baltimore City showed the largest number of exhaustions.

Statewide, the average check amount declined slightly from \$179.07 in February to \$178.92 in March. This decline, coupled with a drop of 8,473 in the number of weeks paid, reduced the overall benefit outlay during March by just over 3.0 percent to about \$48.9 million. Weekly benefit amounts declined in all regions of the state with the exception of Western Maryland where unemployed workers received payments of \$165.63 in March, up from February's average of \$163.70. Locally, average weekly check amounts ranged from a low of \$120.81 paid to claimants at the Crisfield office to a high of \$195.26 paid to those filing at the Ellicott City local office.

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